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Reviews

Report of the Committee on the Position of Modern Languages in the Educational System of Great Britain. (His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1918). xxiii+258 pp.

The purpose of this report is "to enquire into the position occupied by the study of Modern Languages in the educational system of Great Britain, especially in Secondary Schools and Universities, and to advise what measures are required to promote their study, regard being had to the requirements of a liberal education, including an appreciation of the history, literature, and civilisation of other countries, and to the interests of commerce and public service." The real subject of the report is Modern Studies, which the committee says "signify all those studies (historical, economic, literary, critical, philological, and other) which are directly approached through modern foreign languages. 'Modern Studies' are thus the study of modern peoples in any and every aspect of their national life, of which the languages are an instrument as necessary as hands, and feet, and head."

There is an introductory chapter on the history of Modern Languages in Great Britain, followed by a chapter on the neglect of their proper study at present. The remedy for this neglect is to convince the public that they are worth while. As propaganda to convince the public of the value of Modern Studies from the commercial as well as from the cultural viewpoint the matter is ably presented, and this chapter merits especial attention by all Modern Language teachers. The relative value of the Modern Languages is determined by four criteria: the significance of the people in the development of modern civilization, the intrinsic value of their literature, their contribution to the valid learning of our times, practical use of their language in commercial and other national intercourse. For great Britain, French is adjudged to be far and away the most important language; German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish, are next in importance, but on account of unsettled conditions at the date of the report no attempt is made to rank these.

A discussion of instruction in Modern Studies makes up the second part of the report. The committee recommends that a child begin his first language at about the age of twelve; if he shows sufficient ability, a second language may be begun after two years. A small percentage of students will be found who have no language

faculty and these should be permitted to drop languages altogether. Emphasis must be placed on an adequate knowledge of one language rather than on a smattering of two or more. The direct method is preferable with properly qualified teachers under suitable conditions. Phonetics properly used are almost indispensable but inaccurate phonetics are worse than none. There is a strong plea for a better adjustment of examinations to modern methods of teaching and that they should receive the careful attention of properly trained men with a "gift" for examining. Oral tests as well as written should be used whenever possible, and not only pronunciation, ability to speak, etc., but also the benefit derived by the student from his study, should be thoroughly tested, at least at the later stages of instruction.

The report considers it "desirable that every teacher of a modern language in a Secondary School should have a University degree, should have spent not less than a year abroad under suitable conditions, and should have undergone definite training for his profession." It also recommends as "most desirable" that there should be a certificate guaranteeing an "adequate training in and mastery of phonetics" and "a thorough knowledge of the written and the spoken language, with a satisfactory standard of pronunciation and enunciation." A "Higher Certificate" is also recommended—to be acquired after about five years of experience in teaching, plus "evidence oral and written, of further progress in the language and its scholarship and in other necessary knowledge." The great majority of teachers should be British, but native teachers are very valuable for the study of pure language.

Even though this report bears primarily on Modern Languages in Great Britain, no modern language teacher in this country can afford to neglect it. The chapters on study abroad, on the organization of instruction in the Secondary Schools and the Universities and their faculties, on general method in language teaching, and examinations, discuss problems of vital interest to the progress of Modern Languages in this country. Aside from this the high ideal so eloquently and persistently set forth ought to be a spur and a stimulant to the most indifferent instructor.

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The Elements of French by OLIN H. MOORE, Ph.D., and JOSEPHINE T. ALLIN, Chicago-New York, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1919. xxxii+392 pp. Price \$1.20.

The material get-up, typographical arrangement, binding and paper of this book are most attractive, and the illustrations, dif-